

Hello Latin America & Canada!

Check out *your* website at: <http://tricare15.army.mil>



- **The FY 2003 Spring POC Conference**
- **A Message From the Office of the Medical Director**
- **How Much Do You Know About Tobacco Use?**

The FY 2003 Spring POC Conference

It's time once again to start planning for the FY 2003 Spring TLAC Point of Contact Conference. Tentatively planned for 22 – 24 April 2003 in Panama City Panama. As soon as we nail down the location in Panama City we'll publish it in the next blurb and send out another email.

An issue that has come up is whether travel via non US flagged air carrier is authorized to Panama. An email was sent out last week and we truly appreciate the great response. If you have additional information on this subject please send it to the tricare15@se.amedd.army.mil email account.

Unfortunately, TLAC will not be able to pay for a social event as we have in the past. We need to know if you would be interested in having a social if it would cost \$15.00 per person. Please email me at tricare15@se.amedd.army.mil with your vote (please include your country with your yes or no vote).

From the office of the Medical Director:

Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow beneficiaries, it is with mixed emotions that I inform you that this is my last message as your Regional Medical Director. I have accepted a position down the street as the Medical Director, Southeast Regional Medical Command (SERMC). It has been my distinct pleasure to serve and advocate for you over the past 18 months. I cannot leave without thanking all the principle parties that make this health care plan work for you in the remote sites of Central and South America, the Caribbean and Canada. Thanks to you, the beneficiaries, for putting your trust in us to coordinate and manage your health care needs and for using the system that has been put in place. Please continue to communicate with us and ISOS in keeping you healthy in the following years. A big thanks to all the POCs who constantly link our offices with the patients. Your services are invaluable and essential in making this care plan successful. The staff at the TLAC office are second to none and they, along with the people at ISOS, are committed to ensuring that you always receive the appropriate care with the highest quality. While it is impossible to meet every need of every patient in every location of the world, the TRICARE plan attempts to do just that. This is an awesome health care plan and the only plan that covers 8.5 million beneficiaries globally. Over the past few years TRICARE has continued to improve, broaden the benefit, expand services, incorporated new beneficiary groups and yet lowered the premiums to the individual beneficiary. I am proud to be a part of such a system.

As a parting note, remember this important message about receiving healthcare in a remote overseas environment.

- BE EDUCATED CONSUMERS.
- Know before you go.
- Understand the environment you are going to from a healthcare perspective
- Do not over task the health care system in a remote site with needs that are better served within the CONUS arena.

If you are going to take family members to a foreign country, make sure the care they will need is available at the new location. If your family needs specialized or long term care, there's a good possibility that the care will not be available in remote Latin American and thus places your family at unnecessary risk.

Thanks again for the opportunity to serve!

Semper Paratus

COL Luke M. Stapleton, USA /s/

WPS Customer Service Phone Numbers for TRICARE Overseas are 608.301.2310 and 608.301.2311

What You Should Know About Tobacco

Tobacco and Athletic Performance

- Don't get trapped. Nicotine in cigarettes, cigars, and spit tobacco is addictive.
- Nicotine narrows your blood vessels and puts added strain on your heart.
- Smoking can wreck lungs and reduce oxygen available for muscles used during sports.
- Smokers suffer shortness of breath (gasp!) almost 3 times more often than nonsmokers.
- Smokers run slower and can't run as far, affecting overall athletic performance.
- Cigars and spit tobacco are NOT safe alternatives.

Tobacco and Personal Appearance



- Yuck! Tobacco smoke can make hair and clothes stink.
- Tobacco stains teeth and causes bad breath.
- Short-term use of spit tobacco can cause cracked lips, white spots, sores, and bleeding in the mouth.
- Surgery to remove oral cancers caused by tobacco use can lead to serious changes in the face. Sean Marcee, a high school star athlete who used spit tobacco, died of oral cancer when he was 19 years old.

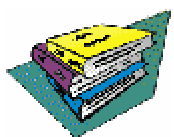
SO...



- Know the truth. Despite all the tobacco use on TV and in movies, music videos, billboards and magazines---most teens, adults, and athletes DON'T use tobacco.
- Make friends, develop athletic skills, control weight, be independent, be cool..... play sports.
- Don't waste (burn) money on tobacco. Spend it on CD's, clothes, computer games, and movies.
- Get involved: make your team, school, and home tobacco-free; teach others; join community efforts to prevent tobacco use.

Parents—Help Keep Your Kids Tobacco-Free

Know the Facts About Youth and Tobacco Use



- Kids who use tobacco may
 - Cough and have asthma attacks more often and develop respiratory problems leading to more sick days, more doctor bills, and poorer athletic performance.
 - Be more likely to use alcohol and other drugs such as cocaine and marijuana.
 - Become addicted to tobacco and find it extremely hard to quit.
- Spit tobacco and cigars are not safe alternatives to cigarettes; low-tar and additive-free cigarettes are not safe either.
- Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States causing heart disease, cancers, and strokes.

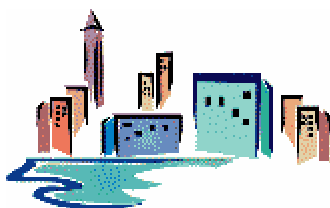
"Smoke Screeners" is an educational program that helps teach media literacy skills to young people, empowering them to make informed decisions about smoking and chewing tobacco by improving their ability to critically analyze the messages they receive about tobacco use in movies and on television. The program includes a moderator's guide and video, and can be used in either a classroom or youth group setting. By drawing attention to how smoking is often made to look acceptable or made to look cool in the media, Smoke Screeners will increase student awareness of tobacco use in popular entertainment, reducing the impact that widespread images of smoking have on young people's attitudes and behavior.

Take a Stand at Home—Early and Often



- Despite the impact of movies, music, and TV, parents can be the **GREATEST INFLUENCE** in their kids' lives.
- Talk directly to children about the risks of tobacco use; if friends or relatives died from tobacco-related illnesses, let your kids know.
- If you use tobacco, you can still make a difference. Your best move, of course, is to try to quit. Meanwhile, don't use tobacco in your children's presence, don't offer it to them, and don't leave it where they can easily get it.
- Start the dialog about tobacco use at age 5 or 6 and continue through their high school years. Many kids start using tobacco by age 11, and many are addicted by age 14.
- Know if your kids' friends use tobacco. Talk about ways to refuse tobacco.
- Discuss with kids the false glamorization of tobacco on billboards, and other media, such as movies, TV, and magazines.

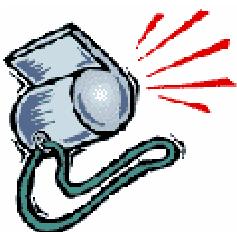
Make a Difference in Your Community



- Vote with your pocketbook. Support businesses that don't sell tobacco to kids. Frequent restaurants and other places that are tobacco-free.
- Be sure your schools and all school events (i.e., parties, sporting events, etc.) are tobacco-free.
- Partner with your local tobacco prevention programs. Call your local health department or your cancer, heart, or lung association to learn how you can get involved.

Coaches — You Can Influence Youth

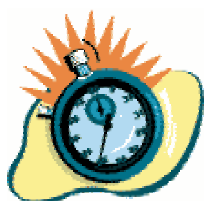
Know the Facts About Youth and Tobacco Use



- Smoking slows lung growth, decreases lung function, and reduces the oxygen available for muscles used in sports.
- Smokers suffer from shortness of breath almost 3 times more often than nonsmokers.
- Nicotine is addictive in ways like heroin and cocaine.

- Young people who do not start using tobacco by age 18 will most likely never start.
- Young people who use tobacco may be more likely to use alcohol and other drugs such as cocaine and marijuana.
- Spit tobacco and cigars are **NOT** safe alternatives to cigarettes; low-tar and additive-free tobacco products are not safe either.
- Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States, causing heart and lung diseases, cancers, and strokes.

Take a Stand—Early and Often



- Recognize your influence with young people. Don't use tobacco, around players. Remind them of the importance of being tobacco-free.
- When talking to players, remember they relate more to messages about the immediate effects of tobacco use (such as poorer athletic performance) than to its long-term health threats.
- Adopt and enforce a tobacco-free policy for players, coaches, and referees.
- Send a copy of the tobacco-free policy home for parents to review.
- Make all practices, games, and competitions tobacco-free—on the field and sidelines and in the stands.
- Announce and display tobacco-free messages at games.
- Consider partnering with your local tobacco prevention programs. Voice your support for tobacco-free schools, sports, and other community events.